



YAKIMA BASIN  
FISH AND WILDLIFE  
RECOVERY BOARD

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November 9, 2012

Phil Anderson, Director  
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
600 Capital Way N.  
Olympia, Washington 98501-1001

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Mr. Anderson,

The Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board is one of seven regional salmon recovery organizations in the State of Washington. Our board members are elected officials of city, county and tribal governments who have joined together to promote recovery of at-risk fish and wildlife in our basin. We write to you today to support Option 1 of rule change number 9 of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) 2013 proposed sport-fishing rule changes.

In 2009, the Board issued the Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan, which was adopted by NOAA Fisheries as part of its Endangered Species Act Recovery Plan for Middle Columbia River Steelhead. The Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan calls for changing the fishing regulations for bass and catfish as part of Basinwide Recovery Action #16, "Explore fisheries management options that reduce predation (p153)." Adopting Option 1 of Rule Change #9 clearly implements this action.

Reductions in bass, catfish and walleye predation will also significantly benefit fall and summer Chinook, which migrate through the lower Yakima and Columbia later in the spring and at smaller sizes. This makes these Chinook especially susceptible to predation by warmer water species. Reducing predation rates on these smaller, later smolts will bring help enhance valuable tribal and recreational fisheries for these non-listed species.

We recognize that it will be difficult to quantify the benefits of these proposals, and that many recreational anglers- particularly those adept at catching larger fish- will likely continue to release many of the bass and walleye that they catch. However we believe that the benefits of this proposal are clear, and would affirm WDFW's ongoing commitment to salmon and steelhead recovery.

Thank you for considering our input on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lillquist, Chair